

COUNCILS AT BREAKING POINT

The human cost of council cuts



Summary

UNISON recently conducted a survey of 21,000 people working in local councils and outsourced council services on the impact of cuts to services.

We represent all types of local government workers. This survey includes responses from all occupational groups ranging from administrative staff, to social workers, to refuse collectors.

The findings paint a bleak picture of local services in decline, people at risk, and staff at breaking point as they strive to do what they can with limited resources.

UNISON is campaigning for more money for local councils in the Autumn Budget. We believe that councils need to be able to retain more of their business rates, and that the UK government needs to make new money available to fund services properly and remedy this crisis. We want to work with every council to achieve this.

Key findings

1. Services are overstretched and neighbourhoods are in decline

- 79% of local government workers do not think that services provided by their council have improved in the past two years
- 79% are not confident about the future of local services
- 58% say that their council is not delivering quality services

2. Residents are at risk

- Only 14% of council workers are confident that vulnerable local residents are safe and cared for
- 67% do not think local residents are receiving the help and support they need at the right time
- 48% do not think their employer makes the right decisions for the public

3. Staff are at breaking point

People working in local councils are loyal, hardworking public servants, determined to give the best possible service to the public. Our research finds that budget cuts are preventing them delivering the best service possible.

- 83% say that budget cuts in the past two years have had an impact on their ability to do the job the best that they can
- 89% say that budget cuts have had a negative impact on staff morale
- 60% work beyond their contracted hours
- 49% are thinking about leaving for a less stressful job, and 43% are thinking about leaving for a better paid job

UNISON's campaign

UNISON is campaigning to remedy this crisis and ensure services are properly funded. Local councils need to be able to retain more of their business rates and the government need to make new money available. Find out about the SOS campaign at www.unison.org.uk/saveourservices